



SBA offers primer for Native-owned businesses

The U.S. Small Business Administration launched an online tool that helps Native American entrepreneurs prepare for business ownership. “The Native American Small Business Primer: Strategies for Success” is a free online business course developed for Native American entrepreneurs that gives an overview of basic business principles and of the SBA’s programs and services that help business owners get started.

The course is a business development tool for the entrepreneur’s toolbox that emphasizes business planning and market research as essential steps to take before going into business. The course gives useful first steps to take, and includes a section on how to estimate business start-up costs that help assess the financial needs of starting a business.

The course is available from the SBA’s Online Small Business Training web page under Online Courses for Starting Your Business at www.sba.gov/content/online-courses-starting-your-business.

NATIVE NEWS

In Print: New book explores the history of the Little Shell Tribe

“The Whole Country was ... ‘One Robe’”: The Little Shell Tribe’s America

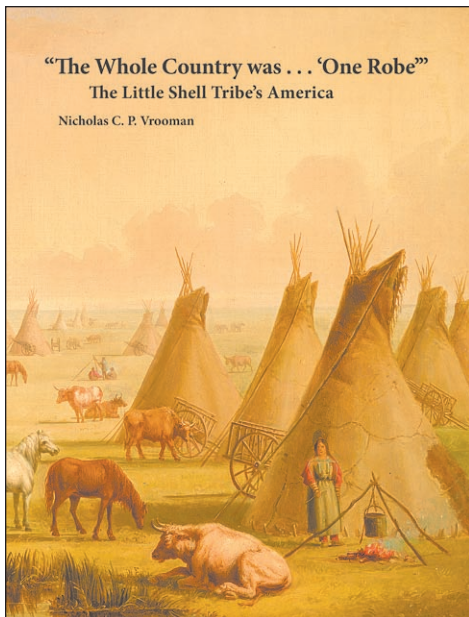
By Nicholas C. P. Vrooman
Co-published 2013 by the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana and Drumlummon Institute, Helena, MT
\$39.95 softcover

After a lifetime of engagement with the history of a burgeoning and distinctive aboriginal amalgam culture on the Northern Plains, historian and folklorist Nicholas Vrooman offers an extraordinary account of an extraordinary people – the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana.

In 29 meticulously researched chapters, Vrooman provides the full context for the Little Shell’s present-day circumstance in Montana, from their origins in the Upper Midwest, to their role as successful traders, buffalo hunters, guides and scouts in North Dakota and Montana (on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border), to their struggle for survival on the margins of Montana towns through the 1950s.

Vrooman writes, “Because of intense historical prejudice, the members of the Little Shell Tribe of Montana live today in a very distinctive and critical conundrum within the greater society. ... The grand narrative of the Little Shell is ... one of immense courage, fortitude, resilience, perseverance, hope, and love. It is a story that comprises the deeper, truer telling of our continent’s history.”

With its remarkable breadth of scholarship, its wealth of images of Chippewa, Cree, Assiniboine and Métis life, and its passionate accounting of a proud people, “The Whole Country was ... ‘One Robe’” is destined to take its place alongside



such classics on Métis culture as Joseph Kinsey Howard’s *Strange Empire: Louis Riel and the Métis People* and Canadian scholar Lawrence Barkwell’s essential anthology, *Metis Legacy: A Metis Historiography and Annotated Bibliography*.

Noted Canadian Métis author Maria Campbell notes that the book “is told from a gentle place by a good storyteller, knowledgeable historian, and friend

of the people. I urge you to read it, reflect on it, and change the shameful way our mutual countries and governments treat Indigenous peoples, and in the end rob all our children of a rich inheritance.”

Exhibit of Indian ledger art opens at the Bair Museum

This summer, the Bair Museum in Martinsdale will host an exhibition of selected work from the Charles H. Barstow Collection of Crow and Gros Ventre Indian Ledger Art. The 20 drawings from the Montana State University-Billings collection offers an intriguing look at the tribal history and traditions of the last decade of the 19th century. The exhibition is open weekends in May, and daily from June 1-Aug. 11.

The American Indian tribes of the Northern Plains were confined to reservations in the last part of the nineteenth century. Many turned to creating pictorial art as a means to preserve and pass on their history and heritage. They used manufactured materials on hand, including pencils and ink, and paper torn from ledger books, school notebooks and office forms.

Major Charles Barstow, who was chief clerk for the Bureau of Indian Affairs at Crow Agency from 1879 to 1897, provided Indian warriors materials and encouraged them to paint and draw. The ledger drawings mimic the function of traditional buffalo-hide painting, and provide narratives of social status and youthful adventures, from capturing horses and “counting coups,” to dancing and courtship.

Barstow’s collection of ledger drawings was rediscovered in 1930 in Roundup, MT, and came to MSU through the efforts of



War Record Drawing from the Charles H. Barstow Collection.

Ruthann Wilbur Hines.

“Surviving from a period of tremendous change, the ledger drawings of the Barstow Collection are characterized by great immediacy, intimacy and even urgency of expression.

They are tinged with romance and nostalgia, but also suffused with fierce pride and a spirit of resilience,” writes Montana artist and curator Gordon McConnell.

The Bair Art Museum also provides a unique close-up look at the Bair family’s Native American collection and a

user-friendly touch screen allows everyone to explore the collection’s objects.

For more information, call 406-572-3314 or visit www.bairfamilymuseum.org.



The Bair sisters with Crow Indians, from the Bair Museum’s Native American collection.

Amendments proposed to Indian Arts and Crafts Act

By Brandon Ecoffey
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from the *Native Sun News*

An amendment proposed to the Native American Arts and Craft act by Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV), if passed, would potentially remove protections from Native American artisans across the country and allow for non-tribal members to label work they create as “Native American produced.”

The Indian Arts and Craft Act, which was originally established in 1990, prohibits the marketing of American Indian and Alaskan Native arts and crafts as authentic unless they are produced by a federally or state-recognized tribal member.

The changes proposed by Rep. Rahall

would insert into the law language that would allow for members of nonprofit Indian organizations and individuals who are not enrolled members of a recognized tribe to claim authenticity.

The amendment would extend the act to cover “any individual who is a direct lineal descendant of a person listed on the base roll of an Indian tribe, whether or not such individual qualifies for membership in the Indian tribe,” and “any individual who is a member of an Indian organization.”

The law provides vague definition of what an Indian organization is and includes language stating the organization does not need to be recognized by any tribal nation.

“The IACA is already difficult to enforce and does little to protect or support Native American

artists and small arts businesses. These new changes would render it completely useless,” said Dr. Jessica Metcalfe, founder of the Native American Fashion blog Beyond Buckskin.

“It sounds like someone in D.C. is lobbying for this change because companies realize that right now there’s a lot of money to be made off of selling our ethnicity. But our ethnicity isn’t for sale,” she added.

The amendment has been referred to the House committee on Native American and Alaska Native Affairs.

Brandon Ecoffey is a staff writer at *Native Sun News*, published weekly in Rapid City, SD. Learn more at www.nweekly.com.